

SchoolMealsNews Bulletin 1819-18

Announcements from the WI DPI School Nutrition Team (SNT)

May 16, 2019

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Updates from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

USDA Final Rule: Hiring Flexibility under Professional Standards

Published on March 1, 2019, this USDA final rule went into effect April 30, 2019. It adds four flexibilities to the hiring standards for *new* school nutrition program directors in small local educational agencies (LEAs) and new state directors of school nutrition programs under the Professional Standards regulations for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).

Important to note: An LEA that hired a school nutrition program director **prior** to April 30, 2019, is still subject to the requirements in place before the effective date of this final rule.

The new flexibilities are for LEAs that hire a food service director on or after April 30, 2019.

Flexibilities at the LEA Level

1. For small LEAs, those with 2,499 or fewer students enrolled, this rule requires relevant food service experience rather than school nutrition program experience for new school nutrition program directors.
2. For small LEAs, State agencies have the discretion to consider documented volunteer or unpaid work as relevant experience for new school nutrition program directors. This discretion will be reviewed/applied on an individual, case-by-case basis. Documentation of volunteer work in a school cafeteria could include a letter from the school nutrition

program director stating, for example, the amount of time the individual worked, the substantive work they performed, and the skills they learned.

3. For LEAs with less than 500 students enrolled, State agencies have the discretion to accept less than the required years of food service experience but has the minimum required education. The DPI School Nutrition Team will allow an LEA with fewer than 500 students to hire a new school nutrition program director with a high school diploma or equivalency, an associate's degree, or a bachelor's degree, but less than the required years of relevant food service experience.

Flexibilities at the State Agency Level

1. Flexibility has been added to the hiring standards for State directors of school nutrition programs by allowing State agencies to consider applicants with either a bachelor's or advanced degree in specified fields. The State agency is allowed to hire a candidate with a master's or doctorate degree in one of the specified fields regardless of the field of their bachelor's degree.

Other Flexibilities

1. Use of the Nonprofit School Food Service Account to Pay Salaries - USDA recognizes the difficulties some LEAs experience when hiring new school nutrition program directors. Furthermore, they understand that the fiscal impact of not being able to use the nonprofit school food service account to pay the salary of a nutrition program director; as this could potentially jeopardize a School Food Authority's (SFA's) financial viability. Therefore, for LEAs with a student enrollment of 2,499 or less (hired on or after April 30, 2019) this final rule provides that a State agency may approve an LEA to use the nonprofit school food service account to pay the salary of a school nutrition program director who does not meet the hiring standards as long as the LEA is complying with a State agency approved plan to ensure the director will meet the professional standards requirements within a reasonable amount of time. This State agency approved plan may include gaining experience, completing education requirements, training, or education courses.

Additionally, if a State agency conducting an Administrative Review determines that a school nutrition program director at an LEA with a student enrollment of 2,499 or fewer was hired between July 1, 2015 and April 29, 2019, and did not meet the hiring standards

in place at the time of hiring, that SFA may pay the director's salary out of the nonprofit school food service account on or after April 30, 2019, provided they are complying with a State-agency approved plan to meet the new hiring standards.

2. School Consolidation - A suggestion was made by a professional organization to allow for a transition period for LEA consolidations as a consolidation may increase the level of student enrollment of an LEA and thus the hiring standards should shift into a larger LEA enrollment category. USDA recognizes the potential challenges this may bring and will work directly with State agencies experiencing this.

All flexibilities are expected to expand the pool of candidates qualified to serve as leaders in the school nutrition programs. The professional standards are intended to ensure that school nutrition professionals who manage and operate the NSLP and SBP have adequate knowledge and training to meet program requirements. In addition, USDA states that requiring set qualifications to operate the NSLP and SBP provides program operators with the knowledge and tools necessary to improve menu planning and service, reduce eligibility and counting errors, and improve program integrity.

Please contact us a dpifns@dpi.wi.gov for questions related to this final rule.

Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT) 2.0 Enhancements:

USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has released new enhancements to the [Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool \(PSTTT\) 2.0](#). The new enhancements include the capability for users to update profile information such as role and job title (for both themselves and/or their employees) more efficiently. It also includes an update to accommodate users who have a hiring date of January 1 or later to automatically adjust the required training hours listed on the tool. This enhancement addresses the Professional Standards Final Rule stating that if the hiring date is on January 1 or later, an employee must only complete half of the required training hours (<https://pstrainingtracker.fns.usda.gov/>).

[School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study](#)

The study, which was released in April, is the first nationally representative, comprehensive assessment of the school meal programs since implementation of the updated nutrition standards for school meals. It shows what school meals look like two years after the changes, reflecting both progress made and challenges that remain (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-nutrition-and-meal-cost-study>).

The study results are presented in four separate reports summarizing study findings related to (1) food service operations, (2) the nutrient content of school meals as offered and served, (3) meal costs and revenues, and (4) student participation, dietary intake, and plate waste.

USDA's Team Nutrition Monthly Training Webinar

Thursday, May 16, 2019

1:00 pm - 1:30 pm CST

This month's [Team Nutrition webinar](#) is titled, "Using the WIC Food List to Identify Creditable Foods in the CACFP," and focuses on how Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) operators can use any State's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Food List to find creditable cereals and whole grain-rich foods to serve as part of a reimbursable meal or snack. Attendees will have a chance to submit questions to the presenters and check their knowledge through interactive polling questions (<https://cc.readytalk.com/registration/#/?meeting=anrg1p3dm16k&campaign=u228cwwwaeear>).

One Stop Shop for all Food Buying Guide (FBG) Resources!: USDA's Food Buying Guide Calculator

Previously hosted on the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN), the FBG Calculator has been added to the [Food Buying Guide Interactive Web-Based Tool](#). Log in, view the training video, and create your shopping list (<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/>)!

Shopping List On-the-Go! Released also on the [FBG Mobile App](#), program operators can now create and use their shopping list on-the-go (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-mobile-app>)!

USDA's ChooseMyPlate Grains Chart

The [USDA ChooseMyPlate Grains Chart](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/grains) helps determine how some grains count as ounce equivalents. Click on the "+" sign for Ounce Equivalent of Grains Table (<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/grains>).

USDA Webinar: Crediting Vegetable Noodles and Coconut in Child Nutrition Programs

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

1:00-2:00 pm CST

On May 22, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. CST, USDA's Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) will present the third webinar of the "Crediting Updates for Child Nutrition Programs: Be in the Know!" webinar series. This webinar series will assist with implementation of the recent changes in CNP related to the release of *SP 08-2019, CACFP 02-2019, SFSP 02-2019 Update of Food Crediting in the Child Nutrition Programs* and other memos including *SP 22-2019, CACFP 09-2019, SFSP 08-2019 Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Corn Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs* and *SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019, SFSP 12-2019 Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs*. These webinars will provide technical assistance and hands-on practice with the newly creditable items in CNPs. In addition, attendees will learn about the FNS tools and resources available to assist with menu planning needs in CNP settings.

The webinar, [Crediting Vegetable Noodles and Coconut in CNPs](https://usda-fns.webex.com/usda-fns/onstage/g.php?MTID=e4c1e7ede2aefa32008b83bfd9ca1eb5f), will provide an overview of the crediting updates resulting from the Request for Information for these foods and provide crediting technical assistance with hands-on practice specifically for vegetable noodles and coconut. Registration for this free webinar is now available (<https://usda-fns.webex.com/usda-fns/onstage/g.php?MTID=e4c1e7ede2aefa32008b83bfd9ca1eb5f>).

Updates from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) School Nutrition Team

The Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Exemption Form

State agencies are required to demonstrate oversight of the PLE provision and maintain documentation that includes a record showing each SFA implementing the exemption had a positive or zero balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of December 31, 2018.

All SFAs are required to complete the online [Paid Lunch Equity Survey](https://forms.gle/Xz7zmxHGcPajwFU8), and we have structured the PLE Survey to also act as your SFA's PLE Exemption Form, depending on your response (<https://forms.gle/Xz7zmxHGcPajwFU8>). If you know your nonprofit school food service account balance as of December 31, 2018, you should be able to complete and submit the online form in less than 5 minutes.

Once you submit the PLE Survey/Exemption Form, you will be sent a copy of your responses via email for your records.

Online Contract Renewal for School Year (SY) 2019-20

Just a reminder that the online contract renewal deadline is June 7, 2019. Please review the [memorandum from April 9](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/snt-mail-040919.pdf), and make sure this is completed in a timely fashion so our staff has time to get all contracts approved. Thank you for your attention to this matter (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/snt-mail-040919.pdf>).

Important: Direct Certification Program

The online direct certification (DC) portal will be closed for rollover the first week in July to get ready for the SY 2019-20. You will not be able to run DC during this timeframe. The portal should be ready for you to run your enrollment starting the week of July 8.

Administrative Review and You: Meal Pattern and Nutrition Quality Survey

Have you taken the DPI SNT class, “Administrative Review and You: Meal Pattern and Nutritional Quality”, or have you completed an AR and wish you knew more before it started? We would love to hear your thoughts and feedback on how we can help you prepare for your AR! Please take this short [feedback survey](#). Responses are anonymous

(<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScIIhZJqzrYKNMNbYcNHEI8PvCEHizXxr-sVNXnSCV3NsVXkQ/viewform>).

Other Available Information

[Wisconsin School Garden Day](#)

The Governor of Wisconsin declared Thursday, May 23, 2019, as the very first Wisconsin School Garden Day (<https://wischoolgardens.org/wisconsin-school-garden-day-2019/>)!

Wisconsin has emerged as a national leader in garden-based education. On May 23, schools, early care and education sites, nonprofit educational sites, and all youth garden programs throughout Wisconsin are invited to participate in garden-related lessons and activities and share information about their garden with fellow educators and garden enthusiasts.

For more information on how you can participate in the celebration, please visit Wisconsin School Garden Network’s [Wisconsin School Garden Day](#) webpage. The webpage also includes an [activity guide](#) and a [list](#) of companies and organizations that provide free and/or discounted seeds.

USDA, EPA, and FDA Unveil Strategy to Reduce Food Waste

As part of the [Winning on Reducing Food Waste Month](#), the USDA, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Food and Drug Agency (FDA) announced the release of a [federal interagency strategy](#) to address food waste. The strategy includes six key priority areas the agencies will work on together over the next year (https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/presidential-message-winning-reducing-food-waste-month/?utm_source=link&utm_medium=header):

1. Enhance Interagency Coordination;
2. Increase Consumer Education and Outreach Efforts;

3. Improve Coordination and Guidance on Food Loss and Waste Measurement;
4. Clarify and Communicate Information on Food Safety, Food Date Labels, and Food Donations;
5. Collaborate with Private Industry to Reduce Food Loss and Waste Across the Supply Chain; and
6. Encourage Food Waste Reduction by Federal Agencies in their Respective Facilities